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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PBOR, PINS, EI

SUBJ: IRISH DEPLORE LONDON BOMBINGS

REF: LONDON 2729

BEGIN SUMMARY: IRISH NEWSPAPERS ARE UNITED IN VIGOROUS CONDEMNATION OF LONDON BOMBINGS, THOUGH NONE ARE SURPRISED TO SEE VIOLENCE EXTEND TO BRITAIN. ONE PAPER SUGGESTS THAT BRITAIN ASKED FOR TROUBLE BY HOLDING OFFENSIVE BORDER PLEBISCITE. ALL ASSUME PROVOS PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE, THOUGH THERE IS SOME CONFUSION. IRA ACTION IN ENGLAND COULD, IN PART, BE A CONSEQUENCE OF EFFECTIVE NI SECURITY MEASURES.

1. ALL THREE MAJOR DUBLIN MORNING PAPERS MARCH 9 DEPLORED LONDON BOMB BLFASTS IN STRONGEST TERMS. GENERAL LINE WAS THAT BOMBS, BESIDES BEING MORALLY OUTRAGEOUS, WILL FURTHER OFFEND BRITISH PUBLIC AND MAKE IT LESS SYMPATHETIC TO IRISH CAUSE. " IRISH TIMES" ADDED THAT BOMBINGS WILL ALSO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN NI AND REPUBLIC, WHERE MOST PEOPLE WANT NOTHING TO DO WITH BOMBERS. ONLY ONE PAPER YIELDED TO TEMPTATION BY ADDING AN " I TOLD YOU SO" NOTE: PRO- FIANNA FAIL " IRISH PRESS" BEGAN
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EDITORIAL BY EXPRESSING " SHCOK AND CONDEMNATION," BUT IMPLIED THAT BRITISH HAD ASKED FOR TROUBLE BY INSISTING " ON HOLDING THEIR WRETCHED BORDER POLL." ALL PAPERS, HOWEVER, WERE UNSURPRISED TO SEE VIOLENCE EXTEND TO LONDON, AS IT HAD EARLIER TO DUBLIN; AND ALL HAD EXPECTED VIOLENCE ON BORDER- POLL DAY. VIOLENCE WAS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO PLEBISCITE RATHER THAN COSGRAVE VISIT, WHICH WAS NOT ANNOUNCED IN TIME TO ALLOW SUCH A CAREFULLY- PLANNED RESPONSE.

2. PAPERS ARE CAUTIOUS ABOUT DRAWING SPECIFIC CONCLUSIONS AS TO RESPONSIBILITY FOR BOMBINGS. ALL ASSUME THAT IRA PROVOS ARE MOST LOGICAL SUSPECTS, BUT THERE IS LIMITED SPECULATION THAT PROVO FREE- LANCERS OR SOME EVEN MORE EXTREME GROUP-- SUCH AS SAOR EIRE-- COULD HAVE DONE JOB WITHOUT ENDORSEMENT OF PROVO LEADERSHIP. REPORTERS NOTE THAT EXPLOSIONS FOLLOWED IRA PATTERN IN ONE IMPORTANT RESPECT: ADVANCE WARNINGS WERE GIVEN-- IN SOME CASES ALLOWING BOMBS TO BE DISCOVERED AND DEFUSED. ANOTHER FEATURE OF IRA BOMBINGS, HOWEVER, IS THAT LEADERSHIP NORMALLY ACCEPTS RESPONSIBILITY, EVEN WHEN OPERATION GOES SOUR. ON THIS ASPECT, EVIDENCE IN DUBLIN PAPERS IS NOT CONCLUSIVE. " OFFICIAL' S" PUBLICITY BUREAU HAS DENIED ANY INVOLVEMENT AND SAID THAT BOMBINGS IN BRITAIN ARE AGAINST POLICY. (" IT HAS NEVER BEEN PART OF OUR POLICY OR INTENTION TO TAKE ACTION WHICH WOULD ALIENATE THE BRITISH WORKING- CLASS PEOPLE OR CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH TO WORKERS, IN BRITAIN OR IRELAND.") PROVO PUBLICITY CHIEF SEAN O BRADAIGH, ON OTHER HAND, IS QUOTED AS SAYING: " QUITE FRANKLY, I KNOW NOTHING EXCEPT WHAT I HEARD ON THE RADIO." PARTIAL EXPLANATION MAY LIE IN ARTICLE FROM BELFAST IN " IRISH PRESS," WHICH SAYS: " IT WAS REPORTED LAST NIGHT THAT THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION IN THE IRA ABOUT THE WISDOM OF SUCH A MOVE, AND THE ARGUMENT IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN HOTLY DEBATED IN DUBLIN FOR THE PAST FEW WEEKS. THE PROVISIONALS IN BELFAST WERE SAID TO BE MORE IN FAVOR OF THE IDEA THAN THOSE IN THE TWENTY- SIX COUNTIES."

3. COMMENT: BOMBINGS IN LONDON ARE, OF COURSE, A SHOCKING DEVELOPMENT IN THIS ROUND OF IRISH TROUBLES. HAVING SAID THIS, WE WOULD SUGGEST THREE QUALIFICATIONS: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A) NO ONE IN DUBLIN IS SURPRISED. EVERYONE HERE IS AWARE OF HISTORICAL PRECEDENT FOR LONDON BOMBINGS (IN 1880' S AND LATE 1930' S), AND HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS ARE ALWAYS RELEVANT IN IRISH AFFAIRS. FORTUNATELY, 1938/9 IRA BOMBING CAMPAIGN IN BRITAIN WAS UNSUCCESSFUL, EXCEPT IN KILLING PEOPLE, AND IRA MUST ALSO BE AWARE OF THIS. ANOTHER PRECEDENT IS ALDERSHOT BOMBING BY OFFICIALS IN FEB 1972, WHICH ALSO ACCOMPLISHED LITTLE EXCEPT ALIENATION OF PUBLIC OPINION. BECAUSE PRECEDENTS HAVE NOT BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL, IT HAS BEEN ASSUMED IN DUBLIN THAT NEW ENGLISH BOMBING CAMPAIGN, WHILE ENTIRELY POSSIBLE, WOULD BE DESPERATE EFFORT.

B) PUBLICITY IMPACT OF LONDON BOMBINGS SHOULD NOT OBSCURE FACT THAT OVERALL DEATH TOTAL ON DAY OF BORDER PLEBISCITE WAS NOT AS HIGH AS PEOPLE HERE FEARED FEW WEEKS AGO. PROVOS WOULD PROBABLY HAVE LIKED CREATE MAXIMUM TROUBLE IN NI ON POLLING DAY, AND THEY MIGHT HAVE HAD BETTER THAN AVERAGE COMMUNITY SUPPORT, SINCE BORDER PLEBISCITE PUSHED CATHOLIC COMMUNITY TOGETHER IN DEFENSIVE POSTURE. FACT THAT PROVOS DID NOT SUCCEED IN DOING MORE DAMAGE IN NI SUPPORTS HYPOTHESIS THAT LONDON BOMBINGS MAY HAVE BEEN DESPERATE ATTEMPT.

C) THOUGH VOTE COUNT IS NOT YET IN AFTER PLEBISCITE, CATHOLIC COMMUNITY SEEMS TO HAVE EVOLVED AN EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE-- BOYCOTT- OF DEALING WITH UNACCEPTABLE POLL. THIS COMES AS A RELIEF, FOR VIOLENCE MIGHT WELL HAVE BEEN MORE SERIOUS AND SUSTAINED IF COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE HAD FELT FRUSTRATED OVER INABILITY COPE WITH POLL.

4. AS SEEM FROM DUBLIN, THERE ARE ALSO TWO GENERAL CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM PLEBISCITE AND RESULTANT VIOLENCE:

A) NIEHTER NI TRIBE CAN SAFELY BE GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO DEAL THE OTHER A CLEAR PROPAGANDA DEFEAT. EXCEPT FOR APPARENTLY SUCCESSFUL BOYCOTT, BORDER PLEBISCITE MIGHT HAVE GIVEN UNIONISTS SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY. THIS POSSIBILITY MUST HAVE BEEN IN HEADS OF THOSE PLANNING A COMPLICATED OPERATION OF THIS KIND SOME TIME AGO. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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B) WHEN IT IS NECESSARY TO TAKE ACTION WHICH ONE NI COMMUNITY PERCEIVES AS AGAINST ITS INTEREST-- AND THIS ARISES ALL THE TIME-- ACTION SHOULD BE

QUICK, DECISIVE AND VISIBLY FAIR. CATHOLICS HERE AS
WELL AS IN NI WERE INFURIATED BY PLEBISCITE, NOT ONLY
BECAUSE THEY HAD TO LOSE BUT BECAUSE IT WAS LOADED
AGAINST THEM IN VARIETY OF WAYS (DUBLIN 1264 NOV 2, 1972).
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